

Nautical Forum

Situation of Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia in 2021

**ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre
18 January 2022**

Scope

- I. Situation in Asia in 2021**
- II. Situation update by Location**
- III. Abduction of Crew in Sulu-Celebes Seas**

I. Situation in Asia in 2021



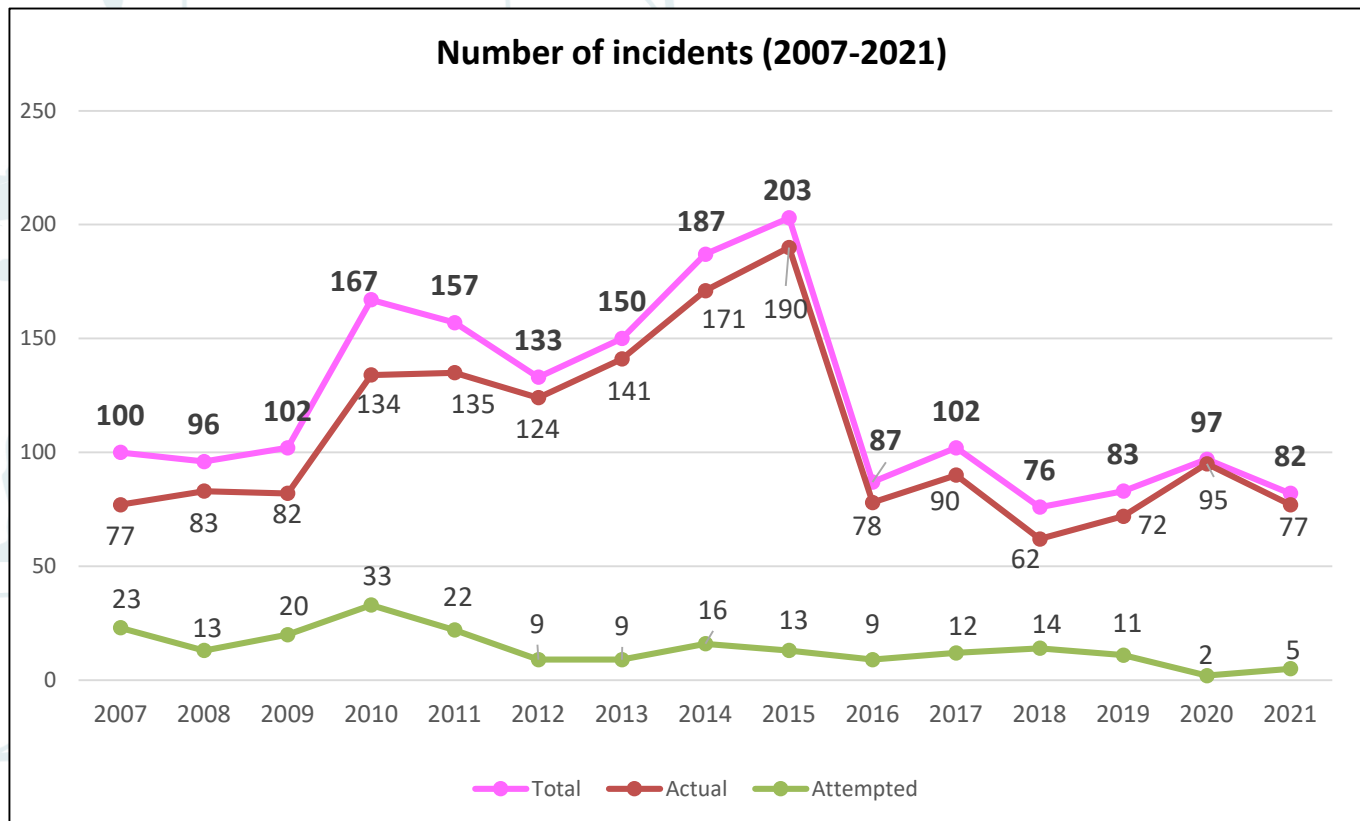
1. Overview

1. Overall situation has improved in 2021 compared to 2020
 - (1) 82 total incidents (77 actual and 5 attempted incidents) in 2021
 - (2) 15% decrease compared to 2020 (97 incidents)
 - (3) Decrease of incidents across many countries and locations:
Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam,
South China Sea, Sulu-Celebes Seas
2. However, increase of incidents in Singapore Strait: 49 incidents (34 in 2020)
3. Threat of abduction of crew by Abu Sayyaf Group remains high
4. Severity level of incidents
 - (1) No CAT 1 incident (most serious incidents) : 1st time in 15 years
 - (2) Majority (69%) were CAT 4 incidents (least serious incidents)
 - (3) Some incidents with violence (low level)
Assaulted: 2, Temporarily taken hostage:5, Threatened by weapons: 5

I. Situation in Asia in 2021

2. Number of Incidents

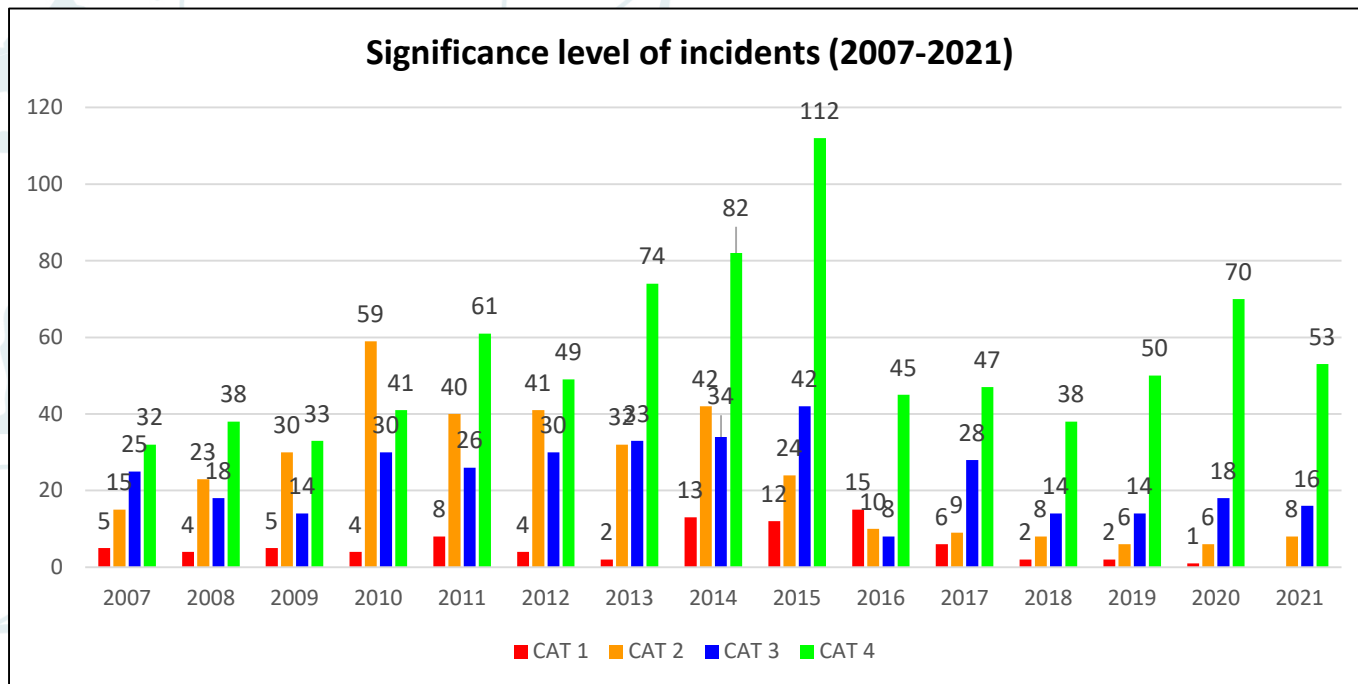
- ❑ **82 incidents** (77 actual and 5 attempted) in 2021
- ❑ Total incidents: **decrease by 15%** compared to 2020 (97 incidents)
- ❑ Actual incidents: **decrease by 19%** compared to 2020 (95 incidents)
- ❑ **2nd lowest** in total incidents in the last 15 years (2007-2021)



I. Situation in Asia in 2021

3. Severity of Incidents

- ☐ **77 actual incidents in 2021**
 - **CAT 2: 10%**, **CAT 3: 21%**, **CAT 4: 69%**
no **CAT 1** incident: 1st time in the last 15 years
 - Increase of **CAT 2** compared to previous 2 years (2019, 2020)
crew threatened with guns/knives, held hostage temporarily
 - Slight decrease of **CAT 3** compared to 2020
 - Majority are **CAT 4** incidents (perpetrators not armed, crew not harmed)



I. Situation in Asia in 2021

4. Location of Incidents

- Singapore Strait (49), Malacca Strait (1)
- Indonesia (13)
- The Philippines (11)
- India (5)
- Vietnam (2)
- Malaysia (1)

All incidents are armed robbery against ships:

(in territorial seas or archipelagic waters)

No piracy incident (on high seas)

I. Situation in Asia in 2021

5. Decrease/Increase of Incidents

☐ Improvement:

Mostly at ports/anchorages (compared to 2020)

- Bangladesh: 0 incident (-5 incidents)
- India: 5 incidents (- 4 incidents)
- Indonesia: 13 incidents (- 9 incidents)
- Malaysia: 1 incident (- 2 incidents)
- The Philippines: 11 incidents (-2 incidents)
- Vietnam: 2 incidents (- 4 incidents)
- South China Sea: 0 incident (- 4 incidents)

Abduction of crew

- Sulu-Celebes Seas: 0 incident (- 1 incident)

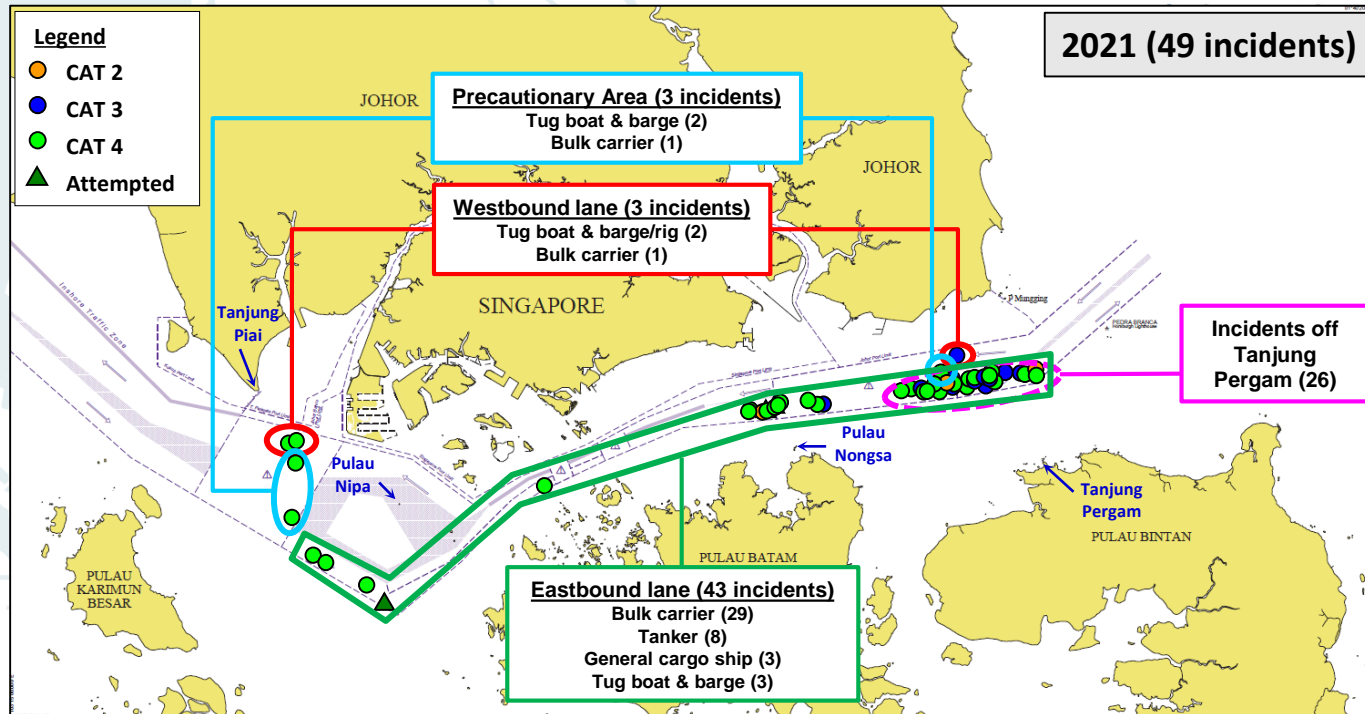
☐ Increase of incidents

Underway

- Singapore Strait: 49 incidents (+ 15 incidents)
- Malacca Strait: 1 incident (+ 1 incident)

II. Situation Update by location

1.(1) Singapore Strait (2021)

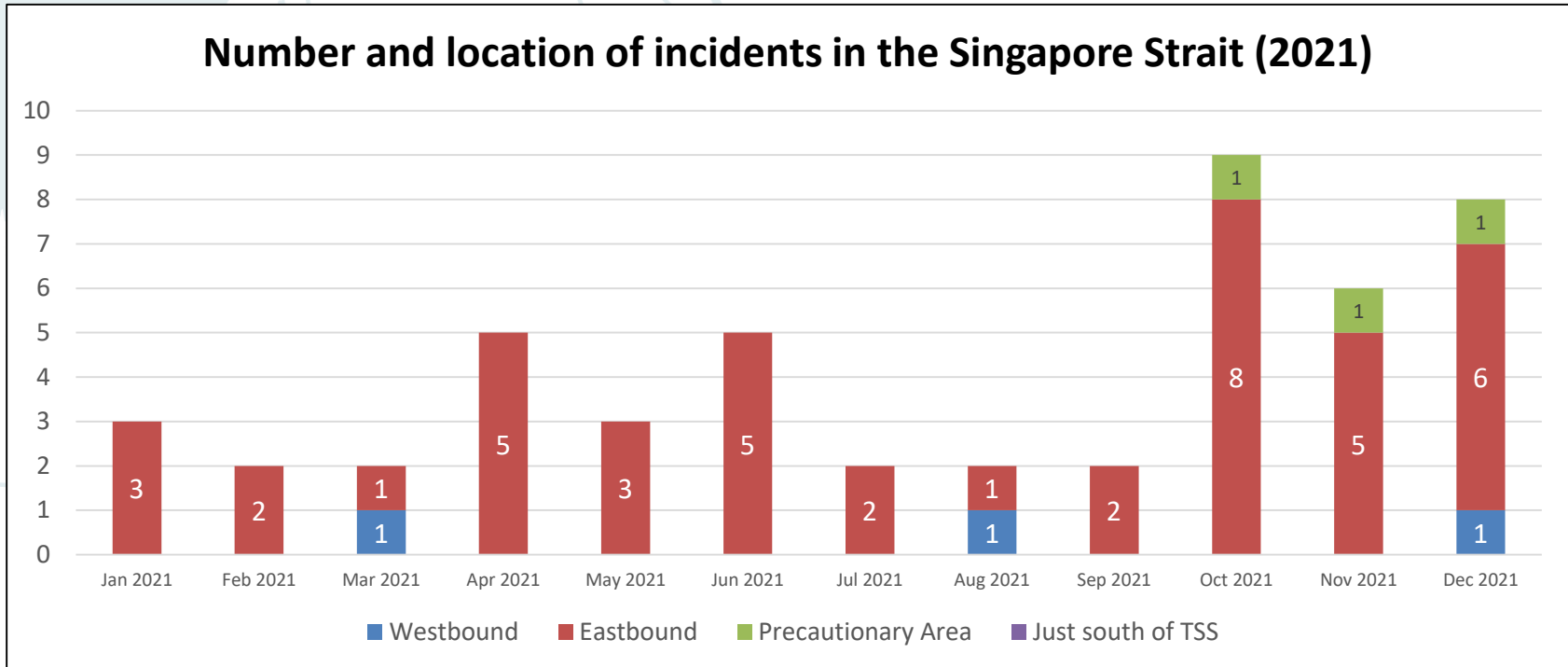


Past 7 years ...

- 99 (2015) → 2 (2016) → 8 (2017) → 7 (2018) → 31 (2019) → 34 (2020) → **49** (2021)
- Decrease in 2016: Arrests of perpetrators by Indonesian authorities in 2014 and 2015
- **2021**: 2nd highest in total number of incidents in the last 15 years
- However, the severity level is not high
 - CAT 2**: 6.5%, **CAT 3**: 24%, **CAT 4**: 69.5%, **Attempted**: 3 incidents

1. Singapore Strait

(2) Incidents by Month



- Same perpetrators suspected for successive incidents in the Eastbound Lane of TSS (Close timing and proximity of location)

1. Singapore Strait

(3) Eastbound Lane: Observations

- ❑ 88% of incidents occurred in the Eastbound lane of the TSS in 2021 (43 of 49 incidents):
 - 42% of incidents occurred on consecutive days
 - Largest cluster of incidents: **off Tanjung Pergam, Bintan Island** (26 incidents)
 - 2nd largest cluster: **off Nongsa, Batam Island** (12 incidents)
 - Severity level is not high
 - **CAT 2:** 7.5%, **CAT 3:** 25%, **CAT 4:** 67.5%, **Attempted:** 3 incidents
 - 49% involved 4-6 men
 - 58% with no information on the type of weapons
 - 79% with no injury of crew
 - 63% reported nothing was stolen
 - Most stolen items: engine spares (13 incidents)
 - 67% involved bulk carriers
 - 95% during hours of darkness

1. Singapore Strait

(4) Recommendations



❑ ReCAAP ISC issued 7 Incident Alerts in 2021

Recommendations:

➤ To littoral States

- Increase surveillance and patrols of littoral States
- Enhance information sharing and strengthen coordination among littoral States
- Respond promptly to incident reported by ship in order to make arrest and prosecute the perpetrators

➤ To ships

- Crew to keep abreast of latest situation, exercise utmost vigilance, adopt preventive measures and report incidents immediately to nearest coastal State

II. Situation Update by location

2. Indonesia (except in SOMS)

Past 5 years ...

- 33 (2017) → 27 (2018) → 23 (2019)
→ 22 (2020) → **13** (2021)

2021

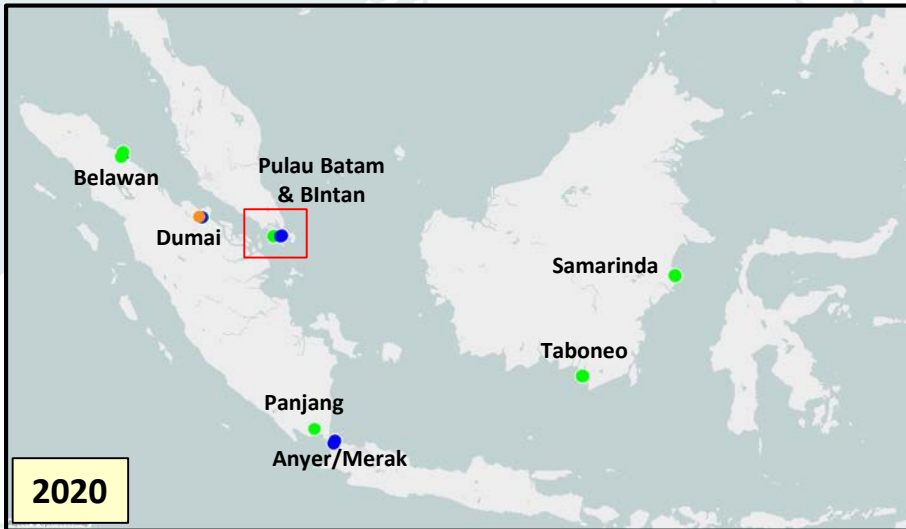
- 1 x CAT 2, 5 x CAT 3, 6 x CAT 4,
1 x Attempted
- Jakarta (6), Belawan (3), Muara Berau (1),
Balikpapan (1), Pulau Batam (1), Bangka (1)

Improvement

- Dumai (5 → 0)
- Taboneo (4 → 0)
- Anyer/Merak (3 → 0)
- Samarinda/Muara Berau (3 → 1)
- Pulau Batam & Bintan (3 → 1)

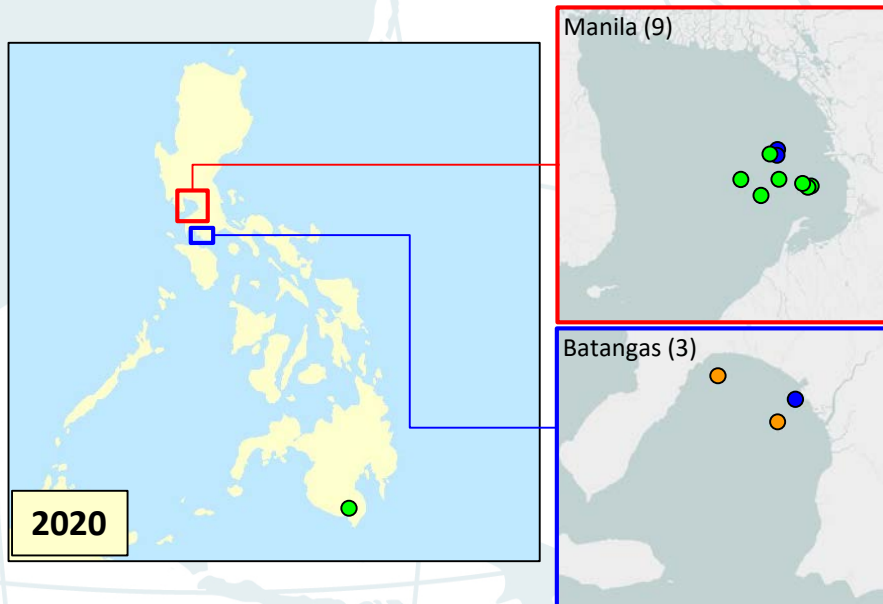
Increase

- Jakarta (0 → 6)



II. Situation Update by location

3.(1) The Philippines (excluding abduction of crew)



Past 5 years ...

- 19 (2017) → 9 (2018) → 7 (2019)
→ 13 (2020) → **11** (2021)

2021

- 4 x CAT 2, 6 x CAT 4, 1 x Attempted
- 9 in Manila, 1 in General Santos
- Attempted incident off Sibutu, Tawi-Tawi:
Warning issued to urge ships to exercise vigilance (Abu Sayyaf Group elements are based in the area)



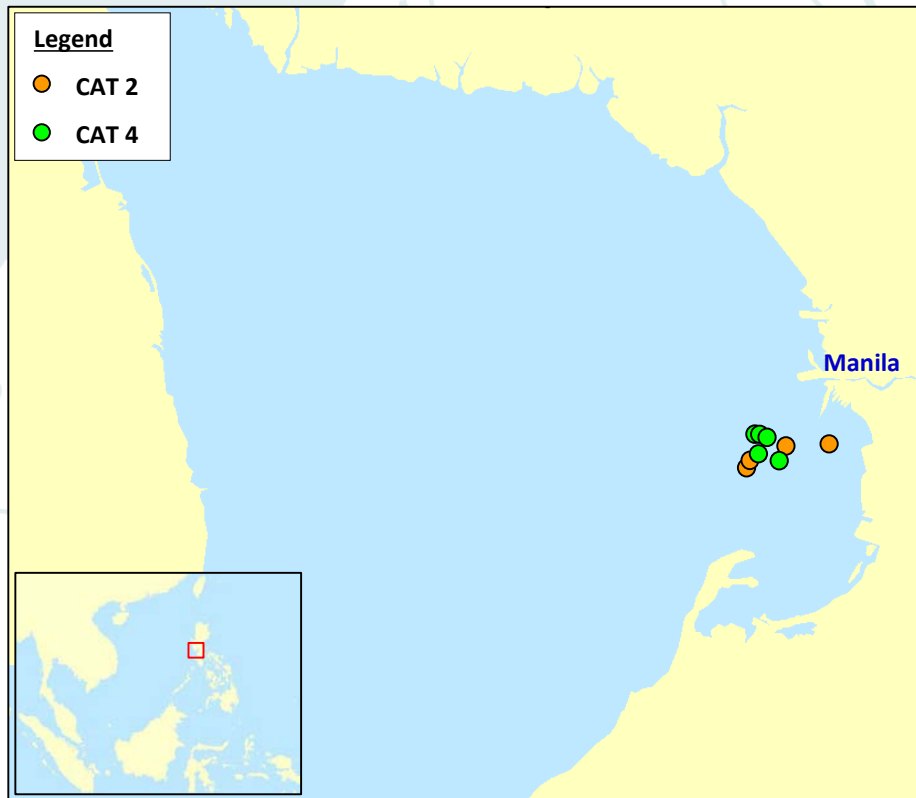
Improvement

- Batangas anchorage (3 → 0)

Same number but more severe incidents in 2021

- Manila anchorage (9)

3.(2) Manila Anchorage Areas



- ❑ 9 incidents at South Harbour Anchorage Areas of Manila
- ❑ Occurred in Apr (1), Jun (3), Jul (2), Aug (3)
 - 4 x **CAT 2**, 5 x **CAT 4**
- ❑ Treatment of crew (**CAT 2** incidents)
 - Perpetrators **pointed gun at the crew and tied/locked them up** (3 incidents)
 - Perpetrator **tried to stab the crew with knife and tied him up** (1 incident)
- ❑ **23 Aug:** ReCAAP ISC issued Incident Alert
- ❑ **27 Sep, 29 Sep & 18 Nov:**
 - Arrest of leader and two members of a criminal group
- ❑ **No incident reported since September**



Crew should **not** engage in confrontation with the perpetrators who are armed with guns/knives

3.(3) Manila Anchorages (Arrest of perpetrators)

- **27 Sep:** Philippine Coast Guard and National Police arrested the leader of the criminal group responsible for the incidents
- **29 Sep:** Another member of the group arrested
 - ☐ Items stolen were recovered
- **18 Nov:** Third member of the group arrested
 - ☐ One pistol and five live ammunitions were seized
- The arrested perpetrators: held in custody and pending prosecution
- Follow-up operations are on-going



Efforts by the Philippine authorities

- Increased maritime patrols
- Immediate response to report of incidents

Advices to ships

- Ships are advised to exercise vigilance, maintain constant look-out and report all incidents immediately to the local authorities

III. Abduction of Crew in Sulu-Celebes Seas

1. Situation Update

No incident was reported in 2021

Last incident occurred in January 2020

No crew is currently held in captivity

Number of past incidents

(Year)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Actual incidents (20)	12	3	2	2	1	0
Attempted incidents (11)	6	4	1	0	0	0

Status of past abducted crew

Total 86: Released/Rescued 75, Killed/Died 11, Crew in captivity 0

III. Abduction of Crew in Sulu-Celebes Seas

2. Advisory & Guidance by ReCAAP ISC

Threat of abduction of crew remains high

- ❑ Abu Sayyaf Group leaders responsible for the abduction of crew are still at large
- ❑ Members of ASG are active

Advisory

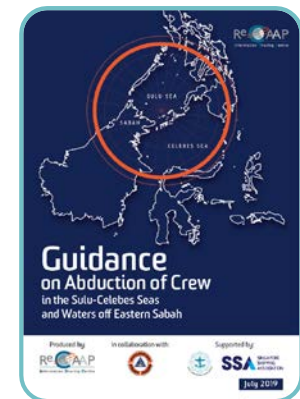
ReCAAP ISC Alert issued on 21 Nov 2016

- ❑ Re-route from area, where possible
- ❑ Exercise extra vigilance and maintain comms with authorities of Philippines and Malaysia

Guidance

Shipping industry is advised to refer to the

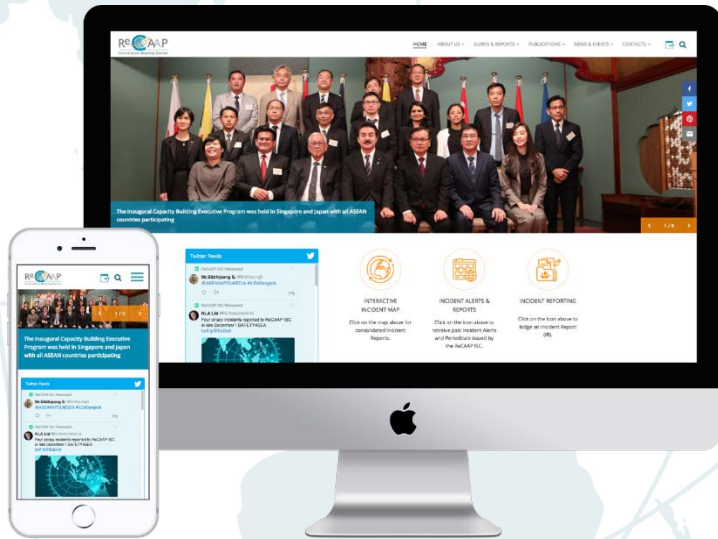
“Guidance on Abduction of Crew in the Sulu-Celebes Seas and Waters off Eastern Sabah”



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